

REPORT OF DR. CHARLES J. HASTINGS, MEDICAL OFFICER OF  
HEALTH, ENDORSING VACCINATION AS A PRE-  
VENTION AGAINST SMALLPOX.

SUBMITTED TO THE LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH, NOVEMBER 13TH, 1919.

The epidemic of smallpox that we are now confronted with in Toronto has gained its present proportions in consequence of the mild character of the outbreak and the differences of opinion for some weeks past as to the diagnosis, a great majority of the cases having been diagnosed as chickenpox. I may say, however, that similar epidemics and outbreaks have occurred in a very large number of the States in the Union during the past fifteen years, in many cases there being probably only one or two of the pox that appeared on the individual patient that had any characteristics of smallpox, the great majority not going beyond the stage of the vesicle, and consequently resembling chickenpox rather than smallpox. However, a definite opinion has been arrived at, and there is no question about the cases under quarantine. No doubt there are also an enormous number of cases that have not been reported, being a mild form of this disease.

In this connection, it is important to bear in mind that this mild form of the disease is quite as communicable as is the more severe form, and that more serious cases may develop at any time. The total number of cases reported up to Tuesday morning of this week is 227. The spread of the disease seems to be rather on the increase, as the average number previous to this date was 25 during the 24 hours, but in the 24 hours preceding Tuesday, 58 cases had been reported. A portion of these are being cared for in the Smallpox Hospital and the balance are quarantined in their homes.

OVERWHELMING ENDORSATION OF VACCINATION.

The present outbreak of smallpox has revealed to us a lamentable lack of knowledge in a certain group of our population at least, as regards vaccination, which, in the light of our present knowledge of this subject, is incomprehensible. Previous to this, one felt justified in concluding that if these people would have even read intelligently the newspaper reports during the war that we have just passed through, they could not have failed to recognize the value of vaccination against smallpox, typhoid fever, paratyphoid and tetanus.

When the various nations entered the war, they called into requisition the best scientific skill in all activities, including the highest recognized authorities in medicine, surgery, bacteriology and scientific medical research, in order that our boys might be efficiently protected and receive the advantage of the united opinions of the aforesaid authorities. The consensus of opinion of these medical experts, not only of the Allied Nations, but also of Germany and Austria, was to the effect that no man should be permitted to enter the firing line until he was successfully vaccinated